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THE WORLD MISSION OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

BY FREDERICK DIXON

A FEW miles out of one of the great cities of the world is a little inn which carries on its signboard the name, "The World Turned Upside Down." The traveller who enters its doors must often wonder how it came by such a name, but the chances are that it is merely a reminiscence of a once popular tune, the very tune that the bands of Cornwallis's regiments played on the day they marched out of Yorktown to surrender to Washington. Tucked away in a London suburb, the little old inn must have seen the world careen many times as it has spun down the decades. But probably never before, not even in the time of Waterloo, has it turned so completely upside down as in this decade of Armageddon.

In such circumstances it is not unnatural that men everywhere should be asking, "In the restoration of the world is the Church playing its full part?" The question is an atom invidious when put, as it is put, to members of individual churches. And yet the query is one which it is not difficult to answer. Anyone who will stop to measure the aspirations of the churches against the frailties of the flesh will probably come to the conclusion that for men and women to act up to the full profession of their faith would be practically impossible, since even the man who raised up Eutychus, in the street at Troas, was driven to admit to the Romans, "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." It was, indeed, the suspicion of "The Gentleman With a Duster" that the Church was failing in its moral leadership, that caused him to write his own famous volume, *Painted Windows*; and Professor Kirsopp Lake, in writing the foreword to the American edition of that book, insists that no one can afford to neglect this warning. The requirement of Christ Jesus to his followers in all ages, "Verily,

verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father," is too deliberately set aside as incapable of demonstration, and the Sermon on the Mount is too readily classified as a mere counsel of perfection, to make it possible to pretend that the churches are bringing forth their full fruit. And the matter is probably better left there. But to the question as to what the individual's own church, which in my case is the Christian Science Church, should do to play its part, it is possible, without even an implied criticism of others, to return a very definite answer.

The Christian Science Church is essentially a healing church. To comprehend, however, exactly what this means, the word healing must not be understood in any mere medical sense, but must be expanded to include the destruction of anything inharmonious with Principle. This, surely, was the theology of the first century, before the miracle had been degraded from being a demonstration of the force of Principle into a supernatural infringement of law. The healing of people physically is an important phase of this demonstration. The healing of their sorrows and sins is an even more important phase, for the connection of sickness with sin was indicated clearly by Jesus when he said, to the impotent man, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." But healing, in its full sense is the exertion of the energy of spiritual law, and this is really what Huxley had in mind when he insisted that a miracle, so far from being an infringement of law, itself an absurdity, could only be an indication of hitherto unsuspected law. Obviously, then, at a moment when the world is turned upside down, a demonstration of the power of divine Mind to control material phenomena must be of the first importance. It was the existence of this power which Jesus preached from Capernaum to Jerusalem; it was the availability of this power that he showed in healing the sick and raising the dead, feeding the multitude and finding the tribute money, calming the tempest and walking on the water; it was the fact of the Science of his teaching that Mrs. Eddy explained in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* and her other writings, that she demonstrated in her own healing of sorrow, and sickness,

and sin, and to the preaching and practice of which she called the members of the movement which she founded.

It is plain, then, that the responsibility of the Christian Science movement is today a heavy one, but it is an individualistic one. The individual, that is to say, is responsible to Principle for living, in that splendid phrase of Milton's, "As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye," so as to retain that mental poise and clarity of vision, that purity and true humility, without which the words he speaks can be only "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal", and any hope of demonstration based upon a scientific grasp of them impossible. This does not mean that every Christian Scientist who is not raising the dead or walking upon the water, or even healing the sick, is a failure or a fraud, but it does mean that he is a Christian Scientist in the exact ratio of his achievement. The spur to that achievement can, of course, never be a selfish one. If it be selfish, eventual shipwreck is inevitable. Jesus himself made this perfectly plain to his disciples when he said to them, at the very moment when they were congratulating themselves on their success as healers, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." He could hardly have said more plainly that the healing they had accomplished was the result of no virtue in themselves, but rather the effect of spiritual causation, to take advantage of which they must themselves remain in obedience to divine law.

At this point the question imperatively arises, What is this law of cause and effect which is of such paramount importance that Mrs. Eddy herself writes, on page 170 of *Science and Health*, "Spiritual causation is the one question to be considered, for more than all others spiritual causation relates to human progress." Spiritual causation is the fact that the one and only Cause which absolutely exists is the divine Mind; that the creations of this Mind constitute the spiritual phenomena, which today we see in a glass darkly, but which, in the proportion in which we rid ourselves of the false belief of life in matter, bred by the carnal mind, we shall see face to face; and that just as this carnal mind, instinct with the lusts of the flesh, is

put off, there supervenes that understanding of Principle, or God, which makes possible the demonstration of the power of Principle in what is known as the miracle. This is a conclusion the force of which is admirably brought out in that incomplete translation of the letters to the Church at Corinth made by one of the few men who have mastered the peculiar Greek of the New Testament, known as *κοινωνία*: "The things we now see are reflections from a mirror that we have to make out as best we can, but then we shall see realities face to face. Now I know imperfectly; then I shall know all, even as I have been known. But meanwhile faith, and hope, and love last on, these three, but the best of them is love." In a world of thought creations, such as modern natural science insists that the physical universe is, an understanding, however slight, of spiritual causation must be valuable; in such a world turned upside down it must be invaluable.

Now, if anybody will critically examine the nature of men's present discontents, he will quickly discover them to be compounded of fears and rooted in fear. If, however, he will probe a little deeper, he will discover that fear is something far more significant than being afraid: it is the existence of the belief of life in matter. If a man did not believe that life, and so sensation, was inherent in matter, he would have nothing to fear. Neither sickness nor death, neither exposure nor starvation, neither threats nor violence, could make any appeal to him, and he would begin more sanely to grasp the fuller meaning of that serene, almost contemptuous, reply of Christ Jesus to the boasts of Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." Christ Jesus had raised the dead, had walked upon the water, had fed the multitude, had stilled the tempest, and had vanished, when it suited him, from the crowd. To imagine, in the face of such miracles or demonstrations, that the Roman governor in his limited material concept of things had power to crucify him or to release him, must have seemed to him ludicrous even in the face of the conflict with sin and hate which he was facing in the determination to prove the nothingness of these and the allness of Life and Truth upon the cross. There, at the judgment seat of Pilate, there

was and is revealed to all mankind the way to help the world. It is to realize that the struggle is not with people, but with mental conditions, which in turn claim to possess and govern people. Pilate was possessed and governed by fear, the fear that the poisonous suggestion, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," would be carried to the suspicion-laden air of the Roman court. Believing in matter and in little else, with the whole-hearted thoroughness of the educated Roman, he saw opportunity, success, riches, friends, even life itself endangered, and he surrendered to his fear. For the moment, he retained his offices, his opulence, and his power. But at what a price, a price summed up by Christ Jesus himself, in one scorching and appalling sentence, "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

The work of Christian Science, therefore, is essentially to lift from the world this fear which, in the very nature of things, is forever oppressing it. In doing this it may become its privilege to engage in those acts of mercy and kindness which are summed up in the parable of the Good Samaritan. But in doing this, it will be dealing necessarily with effect, and its work scientifically must be the destruction of cause, for ultimately there is only one reason for human sin and affliction, the attribution of power to evil, and this reason is itself only a supposititious reason, since evil, the cause of everything unlike Principle, has no reality, and is nothing more than a human belief in the absence of good. Christ Jesus made this perfectly clear on more than one occasion. Once, when he told Nicodemus that the carnal and the spiritual were things of separate birth; once, when he told the Jews that the devil, who in the language of his day was merely personified evil, was himself only a lie, without a shred of truth, which is reality, attached to him.

It is here that the question of the healing of the sick becomes so important. For this healing of the sick is the test of the individual's understanding of Principle. So long as the Christian Science movement is really healing the sick, it is fulfilling its function, and no attack from all the forces of evil can prevail against it. If ever, however, it were to compromise with evil, to compound with the world, it might seem to flourish and to

put on leaves, like the green bay tree, but its doom would be assured. Here is the significance of that paragraph in *Science and Health*, "The flesh and Spirit can no more unite in action, than good can coincide with evil." To which, a few lines lower down, she adds the warning, "Only through radical reliance on Truth can scientific healing power be realized." If, relying radically upon Truth, the individual can heal sickness, he is in some degree, at any rate, justified in his battle against those human beliefs in the acceptance of which sickness finds its expression. That was why Christ Jesus sent out the disciples to combine practice with precept, to preach the gospel and to heal the sick. And that is why he warned them, on their return, not to rejoice in the fact of their personal success, but rather in the fact that their names were written in heaven; in other words, that the fact of harmony was so overwhelming that their understanding of this could, as they had seen, overwhelm inharmony whenever and however presented to them. It is the obvious mission of Christian Science to demonstrate the truth of this to a world turned upside down to-day, and the measure of the individual's demonstration of this is the measure of the fulfillment of his duty to humanity.

Clearly, then, the effort of a Christian Scientist is essentially an individualistic one. It is primarily to live and work so as to be able to preach and heal. In the proportion of his success he must, in turn, bring healing to mankind, and help to right a world turned upside down. The so-called physical causes of this upset are all in reality entirely mental, and are included in a belief in evil. Now Christian Science insists, of course, on the idealistic as opposed to the materialistic theory of the universe. But if Mrs. Eddy had stopped here she would have got no further in discovering the secret of divine healing than did the philosophers. She insisted, instead, on forcing her arguments to their ultimate conclusions, and so in bringing about an appeal to mental healing from which Berkeley recoiled when he declined on tar-water. In doing this Mrs. Eddy broke completely with every school of philosophy and every scientific theory, save that which she herself evolved from the Bible, and named Christian Science. For she repudiated in every way the theory that Spirit was or could

be the ultimate of matter, and carried the philosophic theory of matter as a mental phenomenon, and so an unreality, to the point of insistence that the *νοούμενον*, or mind, that produced it, was itself nothing at all but the personified lie of the Gospels, and as such a mere counterfeit of divine Mind, Principle, or God. When this is once grasped it is easy to understand that the ills of the world do not present to the Christian Scientist at all the same problem they do to the rest of humanity. The sensuality, the dishonesty, the sorrow, the sickness, all these, in their myriad phases, are there, demanding relief and destruction. But instead of their being something beyond his power, he knows that they are, on the contrary, within the range of that power, in the proportion that he lives up to his profession. This does not in the least leave him in an academic frame of mind unable to participate in the ordinary schemes of humanity for the betterment of the world. He can and should play the full part of a citizen of his country. But it does give him a clearer perception of the claims of citizenship, and so enable him the more effectively to meet those claims.

This, it will be seen, frees a man entirely from the reproach of "Black-coated Sabbatarianism", and carries his religion into every thought, and so every hour and every action of his life. "This spiritual idea, or Christ, entered into the minutiae of the life of the personal Jesus. It made him an honest man, a good carpenter and a good man, before it could make him the glorified."¹ Now every Christian Scientist should know enough of Truth, and live near enough to Truth, to be his own physician. And if he were really his own physician, he would carry his understanding of Principle out into the world with him, wherever he might go, whether as a carpenter or as a publican, a fisherman or a scholar, whether into Wall Street or the stockyards, whether in the building of bridges or the writing of books, remembering that there is nothing so large or so small but that it is an idea in infinite Mind, and that he

Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine,

¹ *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 166.

no whit less than the president of a republic or a great poet. The vastness of the power of Christian Science to aid a world turned upside down must become more and more apparent, and the responsibility of every member of the movement more and more unavoidable.

For what does it mean to be your own physician? It means to have ever before you the ideal of making yourself every whit whole, and learning every day how to translate this from a pious desire into an increasing manifestation of Truth. Only in the proportion in which the Christian Scientist achieves this end can he escape the reproach of the world, "Physician, heal thyself." For it is in doing this that the student learns in the words of the great Hebrew philosopher, written to the Philippians, to let his conversation be in heaven. Now the word translated conversation means more precisely citizenship, and thus it is obvious that, in the intent of the New Testament, the good citizen is the man who knows, and so is able to demonstrate, the truth of Principle. It was Christ Jesus himself who said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." What is continuing, in the words of the Christ, but having your conversation, that is your citizenship, in heaven? And does any human being know a better way to help humanity than by doing this? But in Christian Science this is not done by assuming the name of a Christian Scientist. It is done solely by living the life of one, an effort which depends upon a scientific knowledge of Truth. But a knowledge which is scientific is always a knowledge which is demonstrated. Therefore was it that Mrs. Eddy wrote, on page 55 of *Science and Health*, "My weary hope tries to realize that happy day, when man shall recognize the Science of Christ and love his neighbor as himself, when he shall realize God's omnipotence and the healing power of the divine Love in what it has done and is doing for mankind."

This is the part which has to be played by the Church of Christ, Scientist, if it is to fulfil its mission to mankind. What is this Church? It is not a building, not an organization. It is "The structure of Truth and Love; whatever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle" (page 583 *Science and Health*).

Clearly the individual is a member of such a Church in the exact degree in which he puts off the old man and puts on the new; in the proportion in which he knows the truth so as to be freed by the truth; in the ratio in which his citizenship is in heaven. Therefore was it that Christ Jesus, on the road to Calvary, pointed out to every one of his followers for all time his own Calvary, the crucifixion of the lusts of the flesh, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Obviously, then, the Christian Science movement is doing its predestined work in the exact degree in which its members are putting off the old man with his works and putting on the new. In a general way this is true of all churches, but it is essentially true of the Christian Science movement in that it has undertaken to be obedient to the entire demand to preach the gospel and to heal the sick—spiritually and not materially. That it is doing this, not so fully as it would wish but none the less abundantly, is clear from the steady way in which it is increasing, from its testimonies of healing, and from its innumerable charities. If it should ever fail in these, the seeds of its own failure would appear. At present it is the only church in the world which has set itself a standard by which it may be measured in the world. Lived up to, this standard would re-create the whole thinking of the world, and prevent it from being turned upside down.

FREDERICK DIXON.